

# English Literature

## *at MSJ Sixth Form*



**Studying English Literature at A-level allows you to travel through space and time. Reading classic English texts alongside contemporary global trailblazers will develop essential transferable skills in critical thinking, textual interpretation and analytical writing.**

You will acquire an invaluable overview of historical eras, social movements and critical perspectives as you study your set texts in relation to the contexts that have shaped their creation. Discussion and essay writing will hone your written and spoken communication skills, highly prized by many employers. And, of course, you will be able to enjoy spending time with some fascinating characters and intriguing storylines!

**TO PURSUE THE A LEVEL COURSE SUCCESSFULLY, PUPILS IDEALLY NEED A MINIMUM OF:**

GCSE English Language Grade 6

GCSE English Literature Grade 6

## WHAT DOES THE COURSE INVOLVE?

A detailed study of Shakespeare's celebrated comedy, Twelfth Night, provides insight into the class and gender politics of Elizabethan England. A comparative study of Chaucer's The Merchant's Tale and Ibsen's A Doll's House considers the treatment of such themes as love and marriage in two strikingly different contexts. In the 'Women in Literature' module you will study novels by Virginia Woolf and Jane Austen. You will also cover wider reading in preparation for writing a critical appreciation of an unseen passage in the final paper. Finally, your two coursework essays provide an exciting opportunity to study some recent prizewinning global literature. You will write a detailed commentary on poetry by the Native American writer Natalie Diaz. You will also compare the novel Homegoing by Yaa Gyasi and the play Ruined by Lynn Nottage, both of which offer compelling accounts of the ways in which slavery, colonialism and conflict have impacted Black lives.

## IS IT THE RIGHT COURSE FOR ME?

### What skills will I need?

If you are intrigued by how stories are told, who gets to tell them, and what makes them effective, then you will enjoy exploring the possibilities of language through this course. A willingness to read widely, participate in discussion and share your ideas in writing is essential. You will become both a better writer and a more insightful reader over the course of the A-level.

## WITH WHICH OTHER SUBJECTS DOES IT WORK BEST?

English is a superb complement to many other subjects. In addition to other Humanities subjects, it is a natural companion for Modern Foreign Languages (which usually also involve some study of Literature and cultural background) and also for artistic subjects (the study of different artistic periods in English is excellent background for Drama or Art, for example). Also, English works well as a self-contained stand-alone subject for students who are studying Maths and Sciences or Maths and Economics, who want one cultural subject to vary their portfolio and demonstrate their written communication skills.

## WHAT ARE THE POSSIBLE CAREER PATHWAYS?

An A Level in English Literature is highly valued by institutions of Higher Education and provides a wide range of opportunities for courses at degree level; it is therefore a stepping stone towards a vast array of possible careers. As well as the obvious (journalism, publishing, advertising, academia), the best-paid careers in law, finance, management, public administration, politics and even tech are accessible via an English qualification.

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## HEAD OF SUBJECT

**Dr S Harrison**

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## EXAM BOARD

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## HOW IS IT ASSESSED?

The course is assessed through two written examinations and one coursework folder. Both papers are two and a half hours long, one covering Shakespeare, Chaucer and Ibsen, the other covering the 'Women in Literature' module. The coursework folder will be 3000 words long and cover Eliot, Joyce and a work of modern drama.